



Ducklington Pre-School

Inspection report for early years provision

Unique Reference Number	134435
Inspection date	07 December 2006
Inspector	Gillian Little
Setting Address	Village Hall, Ducklington, Witney, Oxfordshire, OX29 7YH
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Registered person	Ducklington Pre-School
Type of inspection	Integrated
Type of care	Full day care

ABOUT THIS INSPECTION

The purpose of this inspection is to assure government, parents and the public of the quality of childcare and, if applicable, of nursery education. The inspection was carried out under Part XA Children Act 1989 as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000 and, where nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

This report details the main strengths and any areas for improvement identified during the inspection. The judgements included in the report are made in relation to the outcomes for children set out in the Children Act 2004; the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding; and, where nursery education is provided, the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

The report includes information on any complaints about the childcare provision which Ofsted has received since the last inspection or registration or 1 April 2004 whichever is the later.

The key inspection judgements and what they mean

Outstanding: this aspect of the provision is of exceptionally high quality

Good: this aspect of the provision is strong

Satisfactory: this aspect of the provision is sound

Inadequate: this aspect of the provision is not good enough

For more information about early years inspections, please see the booklet *Are you ready for your inspection?* which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

THE QUALITY AND STANDARDS OF THE CARE AND NURSERY EDUCATION

On the basis of the evidence collected on this inspection:

The quality and standards of the care are satisfactory. The registered person meets the National Standards for under 8s day care and childminding.

The quality and standards of the nursery education are satisfactory.

WHAT SORT OF SETTING IS IT?

Ducklington Pre-School is run by a parent management committee and has been in operation for approximately 32 years. It operates from a community hall in a village near Witney. A maximum of 26 children may attend the pre-school at any one time. The pre-school is open five days each week from 09:00 until 11:45 during school term times. A lunchtime club is available on Tuesdays from 11:45 until 12:45. All children share access to a secure enclosed outdoor play area.

There are currently 37 children aged from two to under five years on roll. Of these, 23 children receive funding for nursery education. Children come from a wide catchment area.

The pre-school employs four staff. The supervisor and two other staff hold appropriate early years qualifications. Of these, one staff member is working towards a qualification.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROVISION

Helping children to be healthy

The provision is satisfactory.

Children are able to play in a clean environment and staff follow a clear policy to maintain cleanliness. For example, staff wipe tables with antibacterial spray before snack times. Safe food storage and a non-smoking policy contribute to a healthy environment.

Children learn about hygiene procedures, such as washing their hands before eating and after using the toilet. They use a variety of hand washing and drying facilities to ensure that their hands are clean. For example, running water, soap, individual hand towels and wipes are all available. However, they occasionally use a communal bowl of water and towel before they eat, which increases the risk of infection.

Children enjoy and benefit from physical activity as they have regular opportunities to play outdoors. They become engrossed shovelling gravel and soil into a wheelbarrow, which they confidently push around. They engage well using paintbrushes and water to “paint” a variety of surfaces. They also enjoy opportunities to engage in physical play indoors, enthusiastically bouncing on a small trampoline.

Satisfactory procedures are in place to ensure that children receive appropriate care in the event of an accident or illness. For example, staff are familiar with procedures and ensure all records are easily accessible. Consent for emergency treatment is in place, although this is too specific and risks limiting options in an emergency.

Children receive a healthy diet and enjoy food such as crackers, cheese, breadsticks, rice cakes and a variety of fruit. Water is available to children throughout the sessions and children are able to help themselves when they are thirsty. In addition, children enjoy milk and squash at snack times. Staff are aware of children’s special dietary requirements to ensure that they receive appropriate food and drinks. Snack times and meal times are relaxed, social occasions when children settle well and staff maintain a calm environment. Occasionally, however, a lack of organisation results in a late snack time followed immediately by lunch. This means that children have to wait a long time for something to eat, then have a snack and a meal one after the other, disrupting their normal routine.

Protecting children from harm or neglect and helping them stay safe

The provision is good.

Children are able to play comfortably in a spacious environment with good facilities. For example, a large, bright hall is available together with a smaller, easily accessible room and adjacent toilets. Children are able to explore their surroundings safely as staff are well deployed and supervise children carefully. Children’s risk of injury is minimised as staff assess risks well and take effective precautions to prevent accidents. For example, there are no hazards on the premises and staff increase supervision when necessary, such as when children are bouncing on the trampoline. Children play safely outside as the outdoor area is fully enclosed and staff check the area daily. Children are able to play with a range of suitable and safe equipment,

which staff regularly clean and check for damage. Resources are easily accessible to children and are suitable for their developmental stages.

Effective fire prevention and evacuation procedures help to keep children safe in the event of an emergency. For example, a clear policy is in place and staff regularly practise drills with children to help them learn about safe evacuation.

Children stay safe when away from the premises as staff have effective procedures in place. For example, they increase the adult to child ratio, keep away from main roads and carry out risk assessments if necessary. Children learn effectively about road safety through discussion and an annual visit from the local lollipop lady.

Children's risk of harm from others is minimised as staff have a good understanding of their roles in child protection. For example, they are familiar with possible symptoms and with procedures for reporting concerns. Security at the premises is good and staff are vigilant if visitors are present, ensuring that children stay safe.

Helping children achieve well and enjoy what they do

The provision is satisfactory.

Children show interest in what they do and are able to develop a range of skills, as there is a suitable variety of activities available. For example, children enjoy construction, small world toys, play dough, painting and looking at books, and are able to choose these activities freely. Most children settle quickly to activities on arrival in the group and show excitement and enthusiasm for new activities. Staff vary activities on a daily basis in the outside area and small room, which helps to sustain children's interest and gives them opportunities to develop new skills. Activities in the main hall, however, tend to remain the same all week and children therefore become less interested as time goes on.

Children receive appropriate support from staff who are well deployed to work with different groups of children. Children receive informal support from staff through suitable interaction, which helps to develop their learning. Children are generally happy and settled; they develop confidence and self-esteem as they receive lots of praise and encouragement for their efforts. Staff recognise children's progress and ensure that they receive appropriate rewards. For example, they take photographs of children with special models that they have made. Children develop good relationships with staff and are able to play in a generally settled and calm environment.

Planning and assessments for younger children take into account the Birth to three framework to ensure that activities are appropriate and that areas for further development are identified.

Nursery Education

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Staff demonstrate a suitable understanding of the Foundation Stage and provide an appropriate coverage of the six areas of learning. Children are able to develop skills in independence, such as helping to tidy up at the end of a session or following requests by staff to run simple errands within the group. They are beginning

to take care of one another and to show respect. For example, they help each other with hygiene routines. They show some confidence in talking to the whole group, telling each other their news. They have some opportunities to practise early writing skills in meaningful ways. For example, they enjoy using the group's "office", which has a keyboard, diaries and files. They enjoy listening to stories in small groups, snuggling up and listening intently. They begin to link sounds to letters through learning about the letter of the week and supplying related resources from their homes. They enjoy exploring practical maths based activities such as sand timers and a variety of construction resources. However, they have limited opportunities to learn about number.

Children sometimes spend long periods engaged in their play, for example, while making model cars and aeroplanes, and have time to develop and modify their designs. They enjoy imaginative play, becoming engrossed in painting activities and exploring play dough. They sing songs spontaneously and have good opportunities to engage in small world play.

Children have good opportunities to use computers and to freely explore resources, such as plastic minibeasts, magnifying glasses and water play. Staff sometimes extend children's learning by supplying additional resources. For example, they add paintbrushes, animals and buckets to the water tray and guide children to use simple reference books. However, they do not plan specific activities for older and more able children which limits opportunities for such children to further develop their skills.

Staff make appropriate assessments of children's progress through the Foundation Stage, adding observations to their profiles when appropriate and identifying areas for development.

Helping children make a positive contribution

The provision is satisfactory.

Children have some opportunities to become aware of wider society as they celebrate festivals from different cultures. However, resources reflecting diversity in society are not present in their everyday play, which limits opportunities for them to learn about different backgrounds. Children have equal access to activities and receive equal concern from staff, who encourage them to share and take turns. Staff know children well, such as family circumstances, and are therefore able to meet children's individual needs appropriately.

There is suitable provision for children with learning difficulties and disabilities to develop satisfactorily as staff have appropriate training and experience.

Children are able to play a productive part in the setting, for example, by tidying up at the end of the session. They learn about responsible behaviour as staff are calm and friendly, and kindly remind children of the pre-school rules. Staff work closely with parents when necessary to appropriately support behavioural difficulties. Children behave well most of the time but behaviour can be unruly at large group times, such as listening to stories or news. Staff are very aware of this problem but are not yet able to address this effectively, which limits the benefits of such activities.

Overall, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered.

Children benefit from appropriate continuity between the home and the setting as staff develop positive relationships with parents. Parents feel welcome in the group, settling their children at the beginning of the session and providing positive support through a rota system. Staff ensure that parents have appropriate information about their children's time in the group through frequent verbal feedback. In addition, parents of children receiving nursery education receive well presented information about the Foundation Stage, how their children learn at the pre-school and how they can help children to learn at home. Partnership with parents therefore is satisfactory.

Organisation

The organisation is satisfactory.

All children are able to make satisfactory progress as staff have an appropriate sense of purpose, focussing on children's play and interacting suitably with them. Staff work appropriately as a team and with the committee to ensure that sessions run sufficiently smoothly. They use time and resources sufficiently well to enable children to develop a range of skills, although occasionally a lack of organisation inhibits this.

Staff have suitable skills, experience and qualifications to support children appropriately. They maintain the adult to child ratio at all times to ensure children are well supervised. Appropriate recruitment and vetting procedures ensure that all adults working with children are suitable to do so. Well organised documentation, policies and procedures are in place and work appropriately in practice. Staff are beginning to use the Birth to three framework to satisfactorily support younger children and some staff have completed training in this area.

The leadership and management of the nursery education is satisfactory. Staff are generally aware of strengths and weaknesses in the educational provision and are able to make self evaluations with some accuracy. They have made some progress since the last inspection and are willing to continue with this.

The provision meets the needs of the range of children for whom it provides.

Improvements since the last inspection

At the last inspection the group were asked to take steps to address issues identified in the risk assessment. The group have since moved premises and ensure that any risks are minimised, increasing safety for children.

The group were also asked to develop staff's knowledge and understanding of child protection issues. The staff have since attended training and have updated the child protection policy ensuring that they are familiar with procedures. This improves safety for children.

The group were also asked to promote mathematical awareness and problem solving for more able children through practical activities. Staff have attended some training and now ensure that activities are practically based. However, activities to develop children's understanding of number are limited and few activities are available to challenge the oldest and most able children. Therefore further recommendations have been raised at this inspection.

The group were also asked to review planning to include learning outcomes and to show how activities will be adapted for older and more able children and those who learn more slowly. The staff now include learning outcomes in their plans with some extension for older children which ensures that they are familiar with the outcomes for each activity. Older and more able children however, tend to engage in the same activities as younger children for most of the time and opportunities to further develop specific skills are limited. Therefore a further recommendation has been raised at this inspection.

The group were also asked to provide more opportunities for children to have independent choice in all areas of learning, especially to encourage children's independent writing skills and the use of books for information. The staff have reviewed storage to allow easier access for children and now have reference books and writing materials freely available. This ensures that children are able to develop appropriate skills.

The group were also asked to improve detail of the early learning goals for parents and carers to help them support their children's learning. The staff now ensure that weekly planning is displayed and they send home information about current topics. Open afternoons and a well presented brochure provide further information to encourage parents to support their children's education at home.

Complaints since the last inspection

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints made to Ofsted that required the provider or Ofsted to take any action in order to meet the National Standards. The provider is required to keep a record of complaints made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints other than those made to Ofsted.

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WHAT MUST BE DONE TO SECURE FUTURE IMPROVEMENT?

The quality and standards of the care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that hygienic individual hand washing and drying facilities are consistently available for children
- continue to develop methods to ensure good levels of behaviour, particularly during large group times (also applies to education)

- ensure that resources reflecting diversity are available to children throughout everyday activities (also applies to education).

The quality and standards of the nursery education

To improve the quality and standards of nursery education further the registered person should take account of the following recommendation(s):

- ensure that children have regular opportunities to develop early maths skills, particularly in the use of number
- continue to develop planning to provide opportunities to challenge older and more able children.

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